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Sketches of a Father Series

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Porcelain Father

The Coca-Cola stained dark brown carpet, sprinkled about with white remains
Of cigarettes, providing a warmth to my bare feet.
I lift myself to the edges of my foundations, stretching to reach that home.
Smack. My hand instinctively snaps to attention.
"I told you not to touch them. You will drop them and break them."
I dream to snatch those porcelain animals from their designated cubbies.
To hold them between my fingers, to feel their smoothness rub against mine.
Most I desire to hold them to know when I drop them they will break.

You lay on the bed that is not your own. A porcelain man. In a room not your own,
A lifeless room overcast with an oppressive grayish blue light that looms.
The surgeon comes in, "Sorry, we could not operate. It is bigger than we expected."
It was not the revelation we had hoped for. My hands reached out. Recoil. Hesitation.
I will break him. "What's our next move?" He grabbed my hand, "Everything will be fine."
I break. My foot buckles, my hand thrusts inwards to contain the new feeling blossoming.
Please, prevent these pieces from spilling out. "I need to use the bathroom."
My hands press against the sink, supporting me as I look into the mirror.
Only an eternal nothingness is reflected back from a blank young boys stare.
I hope to never return back to where he awaits.

Into the room, a room of white sheets and white carpets,
My lovely wife and I awake to the rumbling parade of feet.
The percussions stop in front of our bed.
As my son climbs onto the bed, I catch a familiar glimpse.
I saw it. Past his porcelain white, past the blue hues, past the darkness
And into the nothingness, I saw what had awaited me once before.

A Room to Visit Father

Late nights coming home from work,
You stumble and wander through the void,
To catch a glimpse of him, but he's already there.
The darkened halls stretch out, you cannot see how far they extend.
Arms stretched out to awkwardly grope the walls
To guide you to a brooding dark sky so you may catch
A glimpse of him. Found within the family cathedral,
The living room. A burning cigarette, which rises and falls
With an organic mechanism, pulsates the dying breaths
To reveal a space
Equally empty of love and filled with anger.
His and your private outer dark.

As you enter the room, the low growling of that dog
Forces itself into through your throat, and dives deep into you,
Filling your empty guts, only for it to vomit back out
Through your exterior limp limbs, which now fight
To hold onto the curtains of darkness.

But you know his cerebus is but a dog.
The black soft fur was once your bed,
The tongue that stuck a second too long,
The drooping eyes that searched for his master,
Now they were under the darkness.
The once dog now was indistinguishable.
Only a fluid infinite mass confined
In a shape of a dog. But in this confined space, it had
Infinite reach. After all, it had reached you before.

The dog dragged you into the darkness,
To be held never to let go.
You wished your father had done that.
But now you only see memories of him.
However, he calls to you this day,
“Billy, come over, your father misses you”

You approach the embers of the now dead,
And you feel the warm embrace of your father's
Rough hands underneath your arms. You float
There is no room now, nor space. The only existence
Is felt by the end of your fingertips. Your hands search for
The flesh to bury your face in, as the tears roll down,
Onto the throne of flesh you sit.

Questions for a Father

Who were you before I was?
Who did you hope to be?

Could your dreams contain the greatness that burst forth,
For the world to succumb to that atomic image?

Did the world kill those dreams, telling you to dream is to be foolish?
Am I a worldly byproduct of an aborted dream?

Did your first love love you back?
Did you whisper her name as if it was your last breath?
Did those private moments spent within each other fade,
And give way to the public errors of life?

Why did you risk loving again?
When you remarried, what was it like to love again?
What was it like to lose again?

Did you love my mother?
Who was I to you?

Was I the disappointment that you treated me as?
Was I the boy you were proud of?
Was I the one who drove you to alcohol,
Or the one that pulled you back?
Could I ever fill that hole we never talked about?

Did you ever know I loved you? I hope you did.

Father's Shadow

Scars of resist not resent. /
I will not be you, I cannot be you. /
Not capable of living /
Up to the great man not Jesus /
But the father. The man of which I came /
From lessened. The lessons /
You taught me were not verbal./
I learned from observing but/
When people see me/
They can think only of you,/
Only of you.

Lessons from a Father

The swing stung /
Not as much as explaining /
To my teacher. My mother /
Would ask what I had done /
To deserve it. Talking back /
Was always my problem /
Was talking at all. I could see /
It when he was angered. /
It was me after all